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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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In answer to questions, I should state that Mr. Staples's list of 2000 practical Latin words, which was referred to in the last two editorials, was prepared under the auspices of the Department of Pedagogy of the University of Pennsylvania, *not* under those of the Department of Classical Philology.

G. L.

During the Thanksgiving recess there were several meetings of interest to classical teachers. That of The Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland was announced in these columns (6.49). The chief paper, read by Principal J. H. Denbigh, will soon appear in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. During the same period the Association of Eastern Ohio held a meeting at Pittsburgh, where the chief topic was the Direct Method. Miss Anna Petty brought before the meeting a class of children who had never studied Latin at all, and gave an introductory lesson according to the principles of this method, arousing a very great deal of interest. Some time later a teacher whose name I regret to have overlooked made the same kind of a demonstration at Harrisburg, and a column of sympathetic discussion was accorded it in one of the Harrisburg daily papers, and the work along the new lines was highly commended. I am reminded by these events of an editorial in the Springfield Republican of August 16, 1912, regarding the work of Dr. Rouse at Columbia University. Some of the remarks in this editorial are worth quoting whether we agree with the statements or not. After reminding us that the method is not really new but is in reality but a return to earlier usage the writer continues:

A generation ago the oral or "direct" method would have had scant chance of acceptance in England or the United States, both because the teaching of modern languages was at a low ebb, and still more because a peculiar disciplinary value was attached to learning the Classics in a way which made them as difficult as possible. The faculties provided by Nature for learning languages instinctively and with little effort were disdainfully rejected. The help of tongue, ear, association with daily life was discarded, for these were but base and humble faculties such as the vulgar employ in picking up tongues. Instead, the whole work was put upon the intellect in the narrower sense, regardless of whether this were best adapted to the purpose or not. A carefully prescribed routine of grammatical drill was adopted, there was much slow and painful translation with the constant help

of a dictionary, and much wretched writing of Latin prose and even Latin verse. Industrious students with minds naturally adapted to this puzzle work became brilliant classical scholars, after the waste of not a little time in doing things wrong; the average pupil had many switchings for bad grammar and false quantities and left school with a feeble smattering of the Classics which he proceeded promptly to forget.

But now the disciplinary theory has been so far discredited that one will seldom find a teacher of authority openly maintaining that language study is more valuable for being made needlessly difficult so as to afford the growing mind a stiff gymnastic. On the other hand, the disparagement of the Classics common a few years ago is steadily diminishing, and educational opinion increasingly favors Latin and Greek as well, provided they can be learned with such mastery as to give them real cultural value. The chief criticism of Latin, as taught on a large scale in the secondary schools of America where Greek has nearly dropped out, is that the great majority get but a useless smattering in return for an expenditure of time sufficient to learn something worth while. So the way is fully open for such a radical and important reform in teaching as Dr. Rouse has brought over from England.

That the method is feasible is a matter of course; it would be strange if any expert teacher of languages could doubt it for a moment. Latin is after all but a language like another, and the same principles hold good for all. Moreover, the Renaissance and modern times as well are full of examples of the successful teaching of Latin as a spoken tongue. The one reason for skepticism, and for the moment a valid reason, is doubt as to the supply of competent teachers. The ordinary Latin teacher in this country is fairly well grounded in the theory of the language but has no practical mastery of it. The grammar he has studied faithfully, the small range of texts needed he knows well, he is often a specialist in some field of philology, and has well earned a degree. But his vocabulary is limited, he writes Latin with difficulty, even if with conventional correctness, and he cannot speak it at all. To conduct classes in the fashion illustrated by Dr. Rouse would be far beyond the powers of most teachers, even in the better schools, and the instructors in smaller high schools to whom Latin is often but one of several subjects, would be quite helpless.

It is plain that the reform must begin at the top, in the training of teachers, yet this is no ground for discouragement. Anyone who has learned a language thoroughly even by bookish methods can by a moderate amount of discipline acquire some facility in speaking it—within a narrow range. And a narrow range will suffice very well for elementary exercises and conversations. The ease of utterance and correctness of accent and idiom which are expected

of a good teacher of a modern language are by no means indispensable in Latin, not only because there are no rigid standards of right such as obtain in a living tongue, but also because the purpose of this oral drill is not to make proficient speakers but to give a quick, easy and natural introduction to a language which will be mainly studied by reading the Classics. The old theory was that they were to be mentally translated as one went along, and as a consequence many good students have never reached the point of reading easily in the original without mental translation as they read French or German. But this must be the ideal of the reformed study of Latin, and it can be attained much more quickly and easily by the direct method as practised by Dr. Rouse.

G. L.

THE CLASSICS

In the present-day civilization, in which the bulk of energy is expended along the lines of material progress, in which there is the unmistakable inclination to express the value of every social force in terms of dollars and cents, in which the concrete products of industrial education appeal so forcibly to the eye, in which there is a marked tendency to convert so many of our institutions of learning into centers of vocational training, and in which time has become the scarcest of human possessions, it is no great wonder that those who advocate and support the higher culture are constantly called upon to show the value not only of the higher education as a whole, but also of the various courses included under this designation. No strong argument is required to convince those who take a strictly utilitarian view of educational courses that those branches which have a direct and obvious bearing upon life should be included in any scheme having for its purpose either secondary or higher training. But when we come to the consideration of the so-called humanistic subjects whose bearing upon making a living is by no means so obvious, but whose influence upon life and character is inestimable, it is well-nigh impossible to convince those of strong practical bent that such studies have any place at all in our modern scheme of education. To no other courses on the list of humanistic subjects does the latter statement apply with greater force than to those embracing a study of the Greek and the Latin languages and literatures.

It may not be out of place in a discussion of this kind to point out just why Greek and Latin have until recently held a leading position in our modern educational system. Only a small percentage of the students who have studied either or both of these languages ever take the trouble to find out why the Classics form such an important feature of their educational life; they accept the study of the ancient languages as a matter of fact, just as they accept other customs and conditions into which they are born. Our civilization is essentially European and the modern civilization of Europe is based upon that of Greece and Rome. As one writer says: "It is the essential relation which Greece and Rome have to

modern civilization which makes the study of their spirit so important in modern education". So, at the very beginning of the modern civilization, when many of the arts and most of the sciences were either in their infancy or not yet thought of, the Classics formed the bone and sinew of that important educational movement known as the Revival of Learning. The ancient civilization had come to its end in Italy; in Italy the modern civilization began. It was soon after the fall of Constantinople that many Greek scholars sought refuge in Italy and under the patronage of wealth became the teachers of all Europe. The first three Italian authors—Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch—all of whom had made a serious study of the Classics, paved the way for the early labors of those teachers who, in their efforts to collect manuscripts, to make translations and to establish libraries, received the indorsement and the support of several of the clergy. Enthusiastic pupils flocked from England, France, and Germany to listen to these Italian scholars and afterwards carried the seeds of this new culture to their own countries beyond the Alps. In this way the study of Greek became a part of the higher educational scheme of all the leading countries of Europe. The Universities not only made it a part of their curricula, but for a long time regarded all other subjects as being important only in proportion to their relation to the Greek learning.

It is a well-known fact that the Latin language never ceased to be used even after the fall of the Roman civilization, but that, from that time on through the Middle Ages, it constituted the language of the Church, was the medium of all international intercourse, and the instrument for the expression of all higher thought. It became the language of the diplomat and of the scholar. All treatises on theology, law, science, criticism and philosophy were written in the language of Cicero and Livy. More than that, it was through the Latin and its literature that the scholars of the time were introduced into the life and the thought of the ancient world. It is not strange, then, that Latin, touching as it did the scholar and the man of affairs in so many points of their investigations and activities, should have become at the beginning of modern civilization a natural and necessary part of the higher learning. Until the middle part of the last century, the place of the classical languages in the higher education was unquestioned. All Christian nations had regarded them as the most valuable source of culture and as the indispensable equipment of the scholar, whether his investigations lay in the realm of science, literature or history. In fact there could be no higher education which did not embrace a study of the Classics.

The aim of education is to fit young men and women for the highest duties of citizenship and to make them useful members of society. How does a